

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 6-7 are now present in this application.

The specification and claims 1 and 2 have been amended and claims 4 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice of disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Ito, US Patent 6,955,420. From the body of this rejection, it seems that claims 2, 3 and 5 are also rejected. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Ito in view of Sakai et al, US Patent 6,309,055. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Examiner considers claim 4 to contain allowable subject matter. Since the limitations of claim 4 have now been incorporated into claim 1, all claims in the instant application should be in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the 35 USC 102(e) and 103 rejections is requested and an early Notice of Allowance is solicited.

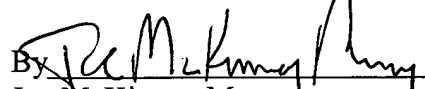
Because the additional prior art cited by the Examiner has been included merely to show the state of the prior art and has not been utilized to reject the claims, no further comments concerning these documents are considered necessary at this time.

In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: Due June 13, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Joe McKinney Muncy

Registration No.: 32,334

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant